

Application No. 10/816,035
Amendment dated July 11, 2006
Reply to Office action of April 21, 2006

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Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0002] with the following amended paragraph:

[0002] String hopper is special type of noodle made from a mixture of different rice flours and it is widely consumed in south east Asia such as India and Sri Lanka. This string hopper is commonly made with a handheld hand-made wooden device consisting of a small cup having a cylindrical through bore extending from its top to bottom. A metal plate with a plurality of openings formed therein is mounted with screws at the bottom of the cup so that the bore forms a cylindrical well therein for holding the rice dough. The cup has two arms extending outwards from its two opposite sides. ~~An~~ A wooden cylindrical plunger having the complementary size as the well is mounted on a carrier which also has two opposite side arms similar to the cup. The device is operated by placing the rice dough into the well of the cup and then inserting the plunger into the well and squeezing the arms of the plunger and the cup tightly towards on another by hands so as to extrude the dough through the plate with the plunger to form the string hopper. While extruding the string hopper, the operator must also move the device in a circular motion so as to deposit the string hopper onto a steam tray for its subsequent cooking. A relatively large pressure must be exerted between the plunger and the cup in the operation, which requires a high degree of dexterity and effort to carry out. Furthermore, the device is unsanitary since it is difficult to clean any dough remnant from the wooden well and between the well and the metal plate. The remnant would breed harmful bacteria.

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Please replace paragraph [0014] with following amended paragraph:

[0014] With reference to the drawings wherein like reference numerals designate corresponding parts in the several views, the string hopper machine 10 of the present invention has a generally inverted L-shaped frame 11 having two spaced mutually parallel side plates 12 and 13. The frame 11 has a front extension portion 14, and a base plate 15 mounted to the bottom end 16 of the side plates 12 and 13. A reinforced brace ~~16~~ 16A is mounted between the side plates 12 and 13 to provide further rigidity to the frame 11. The machine 10 may be securely mounted to a supporting surface such as a table top 17 with a C-clamp 18 as best shown in Figure 5. The front extension portion 14 has a lower edge 19 extending forward from the frame 11 and spaced above the table top 17. A horizontal dough container support plate 20 is located at the lower edge 19 of the extension portion 14. The support plate 20 may be provided with a skirting plate 21 extending vertically downwards from its front edge. A container mounting opening 22 is formed in the support plate 20.